of new sugar factories run by private sector in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) and (b) The Sectoral priorities to be followed during the Seventh Five Year Plan have been indicated in reply to Unstarred Question 418 given in the Rajya Sabha on 27th February, 1987. No Letter of intent/industrial licence has been granted for setting up of new sugar factories in the country to the private sector so far, after the announcement of the new guidelines.

Prices of edible oils

2917. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to refer to the reply to Starred Question 43 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 27th February, 1987 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the soaring prices of edible oils are due to fall in production of oilseeds in drought prone areas of Saurashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to stabilise the current spiral of prices of edible oils;

(c) whether it is a fact that the imported edible oils have been diverted by private companies to earn more profits and

(d) if so, the steps being taken to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) The reasons for increase in the prices of edible oils are overall shortfall in the production of oilseeds including shortfall in the drought prone areas and the impact of lean period.

(b) The Government have taken the following steps to stabilise the prices of edible oils:—

(i) States have been asked to take stringent measures against hoarder and speculators. Checking of vanaspati units has been intensified.

(ii) All efforts are being made to increase the production of edible oils to achieve self-sufficiency.

(ii) Supply management of imported edible oils to Public Distribution System and vanaspati industry has been geared to check the rising trend in the prices.

(c) and (d) Except for one case, no such instances have been reported to Government. In this case, besides investigation by the Bombay police, the Deputy Chief Controller of Imports and Exports has passed an abeyance order against the firm.

Recommendations for safety of Dams

2918. PROF. B. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) what are the recommendations made by the Committee set up by his Ministry to review the safety of the dams;

(b) whether the committee has suggested measures for monitoring the structural defects in the dams from time to time;

(c) whether the committee has recommended setting up safety organisation;

(d) if so, what would be the functions of such an organisation; and

(e) what are its recommendations made in relation to monitoring of rainfall in the catchment area and giving adequate flood forecast using wireless communication to give advance information about incoming floods and pressure of water on dams?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND (a) The important recommendations of the Committees are that each State which has a significant number of major dams shall create a Dam Safety Cell in the State, and that the States should arrange a safety review of dams, which are more than 15 metres in height or which stores 50,000 acre feet or more of water, by an independent panel of experts once in ten years.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The main function of the Dam Safety Cells would be to take follow-up action on the orders issued by the State Government for inspection, maintenance and surveillance of dams and shall be responsible taking timely action on the recommendations of the panel of experts for safety review of the dams.

(e) The Committee has recommended establishment of adequate number of rain gauge stations, including automatic rain gauges, with mechanism for transmission of data by wireless to be established in the catchment area of all dams. This arrangement would give advance information about incoming flood waters and would be useful for proper reservoir operation.

Projects on Bio-fertilizers

2919. SHRI TALARI MANOHAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per scientific studies use of bio-fertilizers for paddy and other crops in Philippines, Thailand and Japan is almost entirely replacing|substituting chemical fertilizers and if so, the steps taken in this direction to reduce use of chemical fertilisers and their imports;

(b) whether a National Project on Bio-fertilizers was started in March, 1983 and if so, what were the targets and achievements so far; and

(c) whether it is a fact that bio-fertilisers will not reduce requirements of different types of organic manures and chemical fertilisers and if so, what is need for the National Project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: (a) It is not a fact that bio-fertilisers for paddy and other crops in Philippines, Thailand and Japan are entirely replacing|substituting chemical fertilisers. However, Azolla, a non-symbiotic bio-fertiliser, is used as a green manure for rice on a large scale only in a few countries like China and Vietnam. Realising the importance of bio-fertilisers in supplementing the nitrogen requirement of specific crops, government has sanctioned a National Project on Development and use of bio-fertilizers.

(b) Yes, Sir. A National Project on Development and Use of Bio-fertilisers was sanctioned in March, 1983. The production target has been fixed at 600 tonnes of Rhizobium culture and Blue Green Algae each per annum. The estimated production of Blue Green algae during 1984-85 and 1985-86 through BGA sub-centres have been of the order of 75 tonnes and 125 tonnes respectively.

(c) Bio-fertilisers are soil and crops specific and will augment the nitrogen requirement depending on the effec-